

# I JUST CAN'T REMEMBER.....

## .....a look at drug-facilitated sexual assault

**But I was at a party of friends....or on a cruise where everyone was there to just have fun.... or on a date with a “nice” person or.....** We want to assume that we are in a safe environment. But even “friends” can be dangerous and among “friends” there are often “friends of friends” and even strangers who slip in. A party in an open bar is NOT a closed environment. While all may be there to have a good time, some people have a very different idea of “fun.” Sometimes, sadly, it is those we trust who hurt us most. So that buddy you consider a best friend who would like to be more than a friend could decide to have a sex with you the hard way---drug rape. And, there have been cases of boyfriends or husbands drugging women to let others have sex with them. Twisted indeed, but a reality for some.

***But I’m 55 (or 15 or 75 or.....), I’m not someone going out to parties and acting wild.*** Drug rape can happen to anyone of any age in any environment, from a private home to a party to a cruise or even in a hospital or nursing home. And, yes, it can happen to men too, whether gay or straight. No one is exempt from the possibility.

**But I was with friends and we were watching each others’ backs.** Often people SAY that but what does it mean? It should mean that you never let your friend’s back out of sight but that usually isn’t how it works. Three young ladies went out together with that promise. One wandered away to visit friends. The second realized that their third friend was suddenly acting very strange, too drunk, and hanging all over a complete stranger. She went to find the first friend but when they returned, their third friend was gone---shuttled away by the drug rapist. Or consider the friends who noticed that one lady was suddenly acting very sexual and weird. It was time to take her home but she wanted to go to the bathroom, so they told her to go and then they would leave. By herself? Hey, you already realized something was WRONG with her!! She headed toward the bathroom, alone, never to return to her friends. She was walked out the back door by the drug rapist.

***But if something happened, I’d get help; I’d go to the bartender or security officer or my friends, right? That’s a great idea but.....*** It is possible that security or bartenders or friends are involved; that does happen. More importantly, with the 40-plus drugs used today for rape, many don’t give you the opportunity to realize what is happening, make rational decisions and ask for help. You may simply drop into an abrupt walking blackout or into unconsciousness (depending on drug and dosage) and have no idea what is happening. There may be no time to seek help which is why being with friends you truly trust is so important.

**But my friends realized something was wrong with me so they took me home to let me sleep it off.** That’s great if they removed you from the environment before you were assaulted but leaving you to sleep it off could be a deadly choice. Some of the drugs used (such as GHB) are potentially deadly, especially when mixed with alcohol. GHB, for example, can cause you to lapse into a coma and/or lose your gag reflex. It causes a lot of vomiting. Left lying on your back, unattended, it is possible to vomit but be unable to gag and unable to wake up. This can result in aspiration, literally drowning in your own vomit. If someone is “drunk,” especially if it appears way beyond the effect expected for the drinks consumed, that is a big, bright red flag. Never leave someone unattended in that situation and if they exhibit symptoms like turning blue, vomiting, slowed breathing rate, unresponsiveness, it may be time to dial 9-1-1. Better safe than sorry.

***If you suspect that someone has been drugged and raped (or drugged with likely intention to rape) you need to seek medical attention and call law enforcement.*** IF authorities are reluctant to investigate and feel that the person is just “drunk” you need to insist that a urine sample be taken IMMEDIATELY and retained for testing. If help isn’t at hand (in a remote location, on a cruise, etc.), take a sample yourself in a clean container and hand it over to police as soon as possible (refrigeration important in a long delay). Some drugs clear quickly from the system-- time is of the essence. Urine samples are far more important than blood and yet not all law enforcement agencies realize this. Be polite but insist! Now that a nationwide program is underway for sexual assault victims to have an evidence kit taken and held while a decision is made whether or not to move forward with a police report, more options are becoming available and more training being done.

Remember--being “just drunk” or voluntarily taking drugs and being high IS NOT consent to have sex. But it does confuse the issues. Why volunteer to be a victim? Make smart decisions and protect yourself.

### **You ARE your own first line of defense.**



**Resources:** For immediate help, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room or police station.  
To find a rape treatment center or rape crisis hotline-- [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org). 800-656-HOPE  
For prevention resources & info, visit [www.projectghb.org](http://www.projectghb.org) or [www.911rape.org](http://www.911rape.org).

Written by PROJECT GHB, a nonprofit dedicated to research, education, prevention,  
& improved response to GHB abuse, drug rape & other current drug abuse issues.